DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING

GREEN PURCHASING IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the green purchase drivers in college-aged millennials, as well as the factors that contribute to the attitude-behavior gap in green purchasing. In-person interviews were conducted with a dozen students at Penn State with varying degrees of involvement with sustainability and environmental issues. A segmentation model was built out of these interviews and four unique segments of the college-aged millennial population were identified. A case study was conducted on Patagonia as an application of the segmentation model.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to build off existing research regarding what drives green purchasing in consumers. The intent of the paper is not to have green consumerism become the solution to environmental problems, but instead identify what motivators would make green purchasing more likely in college-aged millennials. The solution to climate change, global pollution, and the countless other environmental threats is not going to be singular; instead, the solution must be multifaceted and executed on both small and large scales.

Green purchasing is an aspect of ethical consumerism and can be defined as consumerism in which the purchaser considers the impact that the purchase, use, and disposal of a product has on the environment (Moisander, 2007). The larger umbrella term of ethical consumerism refers to consumerism that takes into account human rights, the rights and working conditions of workers, fair trade, animal welfare, and the environment (Tallontire, 2001). When I refer to green products or sustainable products in this paper, it is meant to represent products that have been produced in a way that have considered the environment; however, it can be extended to the consideration of other categories in ethical consumerism.
Figure 1: Ethical consumerism is composed of three prongs: environmental impact, human/worker rights, and animal welfare (Tallontire, 2001)

It is my personal belief that every single individual has the ability to make a difference when it comes to protecting our environment if they have the knowledge and tools to do so. Each of us has the ability to take actions such as reducing our food and water waste, recycling what we cannot reuse, and consuming consciously. Alone these actions do not amount to much, but as a collective carried out by large groups of individuals, the potential for change is real. The idea for this thesis came about because of my personal purchase habits and beliefs about the environment. I consider myself an environmentalist and I have a strong desire to make the world a better place; however, my purchase behavior did not coincide with my attitudes towards improving the environment. Sustainability was not a major purchase driver when I was shopping. I would consider factors like price, quality, and brand but not how my purchase was helping or harming the environment. I wanted to understand what caused this gap between my attitudes and behavior and whether others had a similar dissonance. My literature review confirmed that I was not alone and that the attitude-behavior gap was commonplace. Yet, the existing research on
green purchasing and the attitude-behavior gap did not address college-aged millennials like myself, which lead to the topic of my thesis.

This topic has become more relevant with the 2016 Presidential Election. President Trump has made sweeping changes to the environmental policies of the United States and the country could possibly lose years of environmental progress. National environmental policies are far beyond the scope of this paper; however, it is my hope that this research will make a contribution to the environmental solutions moving forward. By identifying what holds college-aged millennials back from purchasing sustainable products and by making recommendations on how to increase green purchasing in this demographic, I hope contribute to a solution for our environmental problems.
Chapter 2 : Literature Review

A comprehensive literature review of all existing studies and articles on factors impacting green purchase behavior was conducted by Yatish Joshi and Zillur Rahman and published in the International Strategic Management Review in April 2015. Fifty-three articles published between 2000 and 2014 were included in the literature review and the authors outlined the individual factors that influence green purchase behavior.

As identified by Joshi and Rahman, there are both individual and situational factors that drive green purchase intention and corresponding green purchase behavior. Individual factors are variables that are drawn from a consumer’s life experiences and include emotions, habits, values and personal norms, and knowledge. Situational factors are not related to the individual but rather the forces surrounding the purchase. Situational factors include prices, product, availability, perceived quality, brand image, and subjective norms and reference groups. (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

The authors conclude that the majority of the fifty-three published articles did not completely find the determinants of green purchasing due to a problem in identifying and measuring dependent and independent variables (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). The authors conclude that previous studies have shown the following:

- A positive relationship between consumer’s concerns about the environment and green purchase behavior.
- A positive relationship between belief that green purchasing makes an environmental difference and green purchase behavior.
• A positive relationship between social, ethical, and environmental ideals and green purchasing.

• A strong positive relationship between knowledge of environmental issues and green purchasing.

• A negative relationship between higher prices for sustainable products and green purchasing behavior.

• Perceived quality of the sustainable product can either increase or decrease green purchase behavior.

• A negative relationship between limited availability of sustainable products and green purchase behavior.

• A positive relationship between reference groups who believe in sustainability and green purchase behavior (Joshi & Rahman, 2015).

A research study conducted by Carmen Tanner at Northwestern University and Sybille Wölfing Kast at the University of Bern identified factors that increased and decreased green purchasing. The study was conducted in Switzerland and involved a survey of 547 Swiss adults. Tanner and Wölfing Kast found that positive attitudes towards fair trade, local production, and protecting the environment were the main drivers of green purchasing. The study found that shopping in supermarkets and needing to save time while shopping were the major barriers to green purchasing. Lastly, the study found that thoughts on GMOs, perceived health benefits of food, factual knowledge, personal food tastes, confidence in certifications and ecolabels, and food costs did not influence green purchasing (Tanner & Wölfing Kast, 2003).
Iris Vermeir and Wim Verbeke from Ghent University in Belgium found that young Belgian consumers are highly involved with sustainable food consumption and are more willing to purchase sustainable products (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). The study, which was published in *The Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* also found that young consumers felt that they had the ability to protect the environment through their consumption of sustainable products (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Two researchers from Penn State, Shruti Gupta and Denise T. Ogden, concluded that green purchasing is mainly influenced by the effects of reference groups and a desire to maximize the collective over the individual. The study found that consumers with high levels of trust in their reference group were more likely to purchase green products because they trust other in the group will do the same (Gupta & Ogden, 2009).

Overall, there is still not conclusive research that identifies that exact drivers of green purchasing or the factors that contribute to the attitude-behavior gap. Factors such as price, quality, convenience, the power of reference group, perceived effectiveness, and personal ideology have been identified as playing a role in green purchasing and the attitude-behavior gap; however, studies often contradict one another and future research is needed.

There is a significant body of research on the millennial generation but almost none on their green purchase behavior. Generation Y, or the millennial generation, was the generation born in the 1980s and 1990s, following Generation X. There are not hard boundaries that define the years of the Generation Y. Millennials are characterized by their technological abilities and vast social media connections (Doyle, 2011). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, millennials now number 83.1 million, with 44.2% belonging to an ethnic group or racial minority. This
makes it the largest and most diverse generation in United States history (“Millennials Outnumber Baby Boomers, 2015”).

American millennials wield about $200 billion in annual buying power and influence about $500 billion in indirect spending (Fromm, 2013). The buying power of millennials will continue to grow as more graduate from institutions of higher education and enter the workforce, increasing the generation’s influence on the economy and how companies do business. Millennials are more tech-savvy than previous generations, seek multiple information sources before purchasing, are more socially engaged with peers and “product experts” both online and offline, and expect the products they purchase to be supported by strong corporate social responsibility from the company (Barton, 2012). Moreover, millennials in the United States are more likely than non-millennials to incorporate sustainable purchasing into their everyday life as a form of social activism (Barton, 2012). This presents an opportunity for companies to engage with millennial consumers on a day to day basis by incorporating sustainability into small purchases as well as large.

There is research on the factors that drive green purchase behavior and factor that contribute to the attitude-behavior gap, and there is research on the millennial population. However, these two areas have not been juxtaposed before, and that is the research gap this paper will address.
Chapter 3 : Research Method

Interview Structure

Interviews were selected as the primary research method to understand how college-aged millennials interact with the idea of green purchasing. The interview process allowed for more in depth conversations with participants that went beyond the scope of surveys. Interviews were also selected because many of the green purchase drivers have been identified by previous research through survey data and experiments, and interviews provided the opportunity to flush out these factors in greater detail. The purpose of the interviews was to speak with students from a wide spectrum of political and social beliefs to find what drives green purchasing in different segments of the student population. The analysis of the interviews was then combined with existing segmentation models of both green consumers and millennial consumers to create a specialized model of eco-conscious millennials.

Each interviewee was first asked to describe their political identity and beliefs, in order to discern if political ideology had a bearing on green purchasing. The hypothesis is that the more conservative values an interviewee has, the less likely they are to purchase green products. It has been shown that strong conservative values are correlated with weaker beliefs in climate change (Newport & Dugan, 2015). Similarly, interviewees were asked to describe their beliefs about climate change, its causes, and what should be done about it. Previous research shows that there is a strong connection between belief in climate change and green purchasing habits (Tanner & Wölfing Kast, 2003). Interviewees were asked to describe the brands that they connect with and why, in order to see if any parallels could be draw between brand characteristics and green
purchase behavior. If parallels did exist, further research could be conducted on the brands that effectively engage college-aged millennials with messaging around sustainability and environmentalism.

After political ideology and beliefs about climate change were discussed, each interview explored the topic of shopping habits for low involvement purchases like groceries and high involvement purchases like clothing and electronics. Interviewees were asked about where they shopped for these products, what factors influenced their purchases (e.g. price, quality, convenience, brands, etc.), and whether these criteria differed for high and low involvement purchases. Following the discussion around purchase habits, interviewees were asked if they consider sustainability a criterion when purchasing products and what notions they had about green or sustainable products. The gap between belief in climate change and the behavior around green purchasing was further explored by have the interviewees discuss why they did not consider sustainability when shopping or what factors held them back from making green purchases.

The three main areas, consisting of political/environmental beliefs, brand affinity, and purchase drivers, were then analyzed and incorporated into the segmentation model. Moreover, personality traits that arose from the interviews were incorporated into the analysis (e.g. how they interact with their peer groups, what topics they are knowledgeable in, how open to adventure they are). The relationship between a single interviewee’s responses were analyzed (e.g. does political identity impact brand affinity or are purchase drivers derived from beliefs in climate change?). Furthermore, responses between interviewees were compared to identify patterns and relationships between political/environmental beliefs, brand affinity, purchase
drivers, and perceived personality traits. The findings from this analysis was then combined with existing segmentation models to create the first segmentation model that focused solely on millennials engaged with green purchasing.

![Political Identity of Interviewees](image)

**Figure 2:** One interviewee identified as socially and fiscally conservative, five as socially and fiscally progressive, and six as socially progressive and fiscally conservative

**Key Interviews**

Interviewees were selected in two ways. First, student leaders on campus who either were involved with political organizations or sustainability organizations were contacted. This was to ensure that both political and environmental ideology were diversely represented. Second, students were invited to participate in interviews through a mailing list, which captured individuals with lower involvement with sustainability and green purchasing. Combined, these
two student groups represented a diverse spectrum of political thought and varied levels of behavior around green purchasing. All students were equally represented in the study. Short biographies on the student leaders are included to highlight the diversity in political and environmental thought; however, the finding of the research incorporates all interviews conducted.

Sara Mitchell is a senior majoring in Agroecology in the College of Agricultural Sciences. She is the Cofounder and President of the Student Farm at Penn State, which is a sustainable farm located adjacent to the University Park campus. Sara works to develop sustainable food sources and to raise awareness for environmental issues. She has been vocal about Penn State divesting from fossil fuels and has been an advocate for sustainably sourced energy.

James Misera is a senior majoring in Political Science and Government in the College of Liberal Arts. He is the President of the College Republicans at Penn State and has previously served as the Chairman of the Log Cabin Republicans. James is currently a political consultant for Gravis Marketing and plans on entering into politics after graduation. As President of the College Republicans, James lead the organization to be the first in Penn State history that did not endorse the United States’ Republican presidential candidate.

Riley Connolly is second year graduate student earning her Master's Degree in International Affairs. She is the past Vice President of the Penn State College Democrats and is still involved with the organization. Riley is the founder of Penn State’s Unitarian Universalist student organization and has interned with the U.N. in New York City. Riley is an avid advocate for women’s rights, the rights of LGBTQ+ people, and for environmental protections.
Anna Rameau is a senior studying Supply Chain Management in the Smeal College of Business. Anna is a previous intern for the GREEN Program in Philadelphia, PA. The GREEN Program works to expose students to the world’s leading clean energy and sustainability efforts and empowers them to be environmentally conscious leaders. Anna works to eliminate waste streams in supply chains and to make businesses more environmentally sound.

John Daley is a recent graduate from Penn State, where he earned his Bachelor’s in Public Relations and Political Science. John is currently working for Cadmus Group in Washington, D.C, where he works on government contracts around the Energy Star Program. John is passionate about reducing energy waste in commercial and residential settings, which he was able to do previously as an intern for GE Power.
Chapter 4 : Eco-Millennial Segmentation Model

Existing Models

Existing models of eco-segmentation address the broader spectrum of millennials. Three models in particular can be overlaid with each other to create a comprehensive segmentation of sustainably-minded millennials. The interviews from this thesis can then be interwoven into the existing models to create the first segmentation model addressed specifically to sustainably-minded millennials.

The Boston Consulting Group released a segmentation model for the millennial generation consisting of six segments. Two of those segments, the Hip-ennial and the Clean and Green Millennial, overlap with the Eco-Millennial Model. The Hip-ennial segment is characterized by an overarching belief that they can make the world a better place. Hip-ennials are cautious when it comes to purchasing, are aware of global issues, and are constantly seeking out information about the products they purchase. They are politically active around social causes. The segment is largely comprised of students and females and makes up approximately 29% of the millennial population (Barton, 2012). The Clean and Green Millennial segment is focused on taking care of themselves and the planet and are highly engaged with environmental and social causes. This segment is the largest contributor of environmental and social activist content. They are the youngest of the six segments and most likely to be a full-time student. The Clean and Green Millennial segment makes up approximately 10% of the millennial population (Barton, 2012). The other four segments have low numbers of college-aged millennials and have little intersection with environmental or social causes.
A second segmentation model was published in *The Journal of Cleaner Production* by Semih Coskun and breaks consumers into three categories: Green Consumers, Inconsistent Consumers, and Red Consumers. The model studies the relationship between the three types of consumer demand for green products and corresponding supply chains (Coskun, 2015). The researchers define Green Consumers as having a high demand for green products and a willingness to pay a price premium for them. They pay attention to the product’s life cycle and its environmental impact at each stage, meaning they are concerned about the impact its production, use, and disposal has on the environment. Inconsistent Consumers have a mild preference for green products but are not as highly engaged as the Green Consumers. They are still willing to pay a slight price premium for green products but do not closely track the environmental impact of the product’s lifecycle. Lastly, Red Consumers are not engaged with green products and have no demand for them (Coskun, 2015).

Lastly, the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication has an extensive study on climate change beliefs called *Global Warming’s Six Americas*. The study includes a segmentation model of United States citizens based on their level of belief and engagement with climate change. The segments range from Alarmed to Dismissive. The Eco-Millennial Model incorporates the first two segments of the model: Alarmed and Concerned. These segments are the only two of the six that definitely believe climate change is occurring, which corresponds to the results of the interviews conducted in this thesis. The Alarmed segment is defined as having the strongest belief that climate change is occurring and having the highest levels of concern. They believe they are well informed about the topic and have taken personal political and consumer action to address the problem (Leiserowitz, 2009). The Concerned segment is the largest and is also convinced that climate change is real and a problem that must be addressed.
They believe that they are knowledgeable about the topic; however, they are not as actively engaged in the conversation or solutions as the Alarmed. The main differentiator between the two segments is the level of engagement and actions taken (Leiserowitz, 2009).

**The Eco-Millennial Segmentation Model**

Based upon the interviews conducted and analyzed, a segmentation model consisting of four unique types of college-aged millennial consumers has been developed and is called the Eco-Millennial Segmentation Model. This model incorporates existing research on millennial consumers and green consumers, as well as the three existing segmentation models. Each segment is derived from political and environmental beliefs, historic green purchase behavior, primary factors influences purchase behavior, and personality traits. Each segment approaches green purchasing and sustainability in a different way and recommendations based on the interviews have been included for each. This is the first segmentation model to address college-aged millennials who have some level of engagement with green purchasing.

Figure 3 is a visual representation of the Eco-Segmentation Model and shows how each of the three existing segmentation models are incorporated into the new model. The blue boxes represent the four segments in the Eco-Millennial Model, and the overlapping circles show the contributions of each existing model to the Eco-Millennial Model. Each segment has an archetype associated with it, but it should be noted that characteristics of several interviewees contributed to the different segments. The segments are the products of several interviewees that displayed similar characteristics.
Figure 3: Eco-Millennial Segmentation Model showing relationship between three existing segmentation models.

**The Eco-Guide**

The eco-guide is comprised of characteristics from the Alarmed, Green Consumer, and Clean and Green Millennial segments, combined with defining characteristics found through the interviews. The eco-guide believes that climate change is a reality and that mankind has significantly contributed to the problem, displaying the characteristic of the Alarmed segment. They understand the science and arguments behind climate change and keep up to date on developments in the research. The eco-guide also believes the climate change is a global issue that will require a global solution. They are the authority on climate change and the environment within their peer groups and they actively teach others about these issues. They have taken political action and consumer action towards the problem.
Moreover, the eco-guide displays characteristics found in the Clean and Green Millennial segment. They are likely to be a social advocate for environmental protections, and that activism often extends into other categories like human rights and animal welfare. A large part of their social identity is built around their dedication to the environment and role as an expert in the field.

Sara Mitchell is the archetype of the eco-guide and the following additional characteristics were pulled from her interview. The eco-guide is locally oriented, meaning they believe strongly in local government, local economies, and locally sourced products. When making purchases, locally sourced is a key factor the eco-guide looks for. They want to be able to track the dollars that they spend and see them end up back in the local economy.

“I don’t really subscribe to brands when purchasing personal goods like clothes and things that you normally associate brands with. I think that when I put like a lot of thought and power into purchases that I’m making and power of the dollar, it’s more food” (Mitchell)

The eco-guide is anti-brand and chooses to purchase second-hand goods when possible to reduce waste. They are willing to pay a price premium for both locally sourced goods and organically sourced goods. This desire to reduce waste and willingness to pay a price premium can be connected with the Green Consumer segment.

“I buy a lot of second hand and so that a way that I approach brand identity by trying to be more sustainable in my purchases” (Mitchell).
A belief that their consumption of local and sustainable goods is what motivates their consumption patterns. The eco-guide believes that they can make a difference by the way they spend their money. They do not purchase organic or sustainably sourced goods for personal benefit, but rather for the benefit of the planet.

“I know that certified organic doesn’t necessarily mean that it’s healthier for me but it is healthier for the environment and the people that invested in growing that produce have also invested in the ecosystem that they are growing in and so that’s really important to me” (Mitchell).

They have a strong set of personal ideals that guide their purchase behavior. The eco-guide is aware of greenwashing and know how to identify it. Lastly, eco-guides put their faith in certifications and eco-labels, and uses them as a primary source of information.

“Organic certified means the same thing regardless of what the brand is, and so I appreciate that. I’m wary of greenwashing and so I think that's why I don’t align with brands but more certifications. Greenwashing is a huge issue and it’s exploiting people’s lack of knowledge around social and environmental sustainability” (Mitchell).

The attitude-behavior gap is not strong or present at all in eco-guides. They are aware of their beliefs and match their behaviors closely. From the interview analysis, extremely high prices are the main factor that can lead them to deviate from their beliefs in purchasing
sustainable or green products, even though they are willing to pay a price premium. Targeting eco-guides is challenging because of their loyalty to local brands and deep knowledge about environmental claims. Buzzwords like “all natural” and “superfood” do not impact this segment because they have researched the terms and can differentiate between true claims and green buzzwords that are unsubstantial. Certifications are the primary way to engage the eco-guide segment, whether that be local grown certifications or certifications that verify the product is truly sustainable. Examples include the Rainforest Alliance and certified organic.

The Eco-Chic

The eco-chic is a comprised of characteristics from the Concerned, Green Consumer, and Hip-ennial segments, combined with defining characteristics found through the interviews. The eco-chic believes that climate change is real and partly caused by humans. They understand the science and arguments behind climate change; however, they are not as involved or knowledgeable as the eco-guide. This is a key characteristic of the Concerned segment. The eco-chic incorporates sustainability and environmental causes into their social identity but it is only a piece of their identity. The eco-chic displays several Hip-ennial characteristics. The eco-chic is seen as a trendsetter that is hip and urban by their peer group. They are into fast fashion and stay on top of the latest trends in fashion, food, and pop culture. Unlike the eco-guide, eco-chic segment is worldly and takes a global approach to purchasing. The eco-chic is typically more affluent and has the ability to afford more luxury and niche brands. Purchases are driven by brand, quality, personal ideology, and trendiness. They are more adventurous and want to try new and upcoming brands. When shopping for groceries, they prefer to shop at specialized
markets like Whole Foods. The segment considers sustainability a purchase driver and will often prioritize purchasing green product, which is characteristic of the Green Consumer segment.

Anna Rameau is the archetype of the eco-chic segment and the following additional characteristics were evident in her interview. Organic and sustainable products fit into the eco-chic’s lifestyle, but their lifestyle is not built solely on these causes. However, their motivations are not superficial. They have an honest desire to do well by the world. Anna describes the brands she enjoys below.

“Definitely Fresh, which is a makeup company because some of the products are so fresh that you can eat them. What other brands do I love? A lot of food brands honestly. Things that a non-GMO, like Endangered Species Chocolate and that kind of stuff. I’m into brands that associate with Fair Trade and sustainability” (Rameau).

The segment is aware of greenwashing and is skeptical about green product claims. They tend not to trust certifications like eco-guides do; however, they do put some stock in such labels and certifications. This is an area that overlaps with characteristics of the Hip-ennial segment. They tend to seek out information regarding the truthfulness of claims and share this information with their peer groups.

“Even with certifications like Fair Trade and Fair Labor, that kind of stuff isn’t necessarily true because of all the different tiers in the supply chain. So I’m skeptical but I trust at least having that on there over something that doesn’t have it for now” (Rameau).
The eco-chic segment is one of the most important segments to target because of their influence on peer groups. They have low barriers to entry when it comes to green purchasing because they don’t mind higher prices, they enjoy the perceived high quality of the green products, and they have an easier time accessing such products in the stores that they frequent. As Rameau said, “Quality is primary and brand name probably second” (Rameau).

I think this is the segment that is being targeted the most and has created this notion that green and sustainable products are part of a lifestyle that the average person cannot afford. This is a potential cause of the attitude-behavior gap in other consumers who feel such products are out of their reach. Marketers have done a good job at making green products seem trendy and fashionable, which is good for drawing in the eco-chic population and members of their peer group. It is not as good for consumers who desire to purchase these products but feel that they don’t fit into their lifestyle.

The Eco-Companion

The eco-companion is a comprised of characteristics from the Concerned, Inconsistent Consumer, and Hip-ennial segments, combined with defining characteristics found through the interviews. Sustainability and environmental policy are not a priority in their life, in part because they do not have the understanding and knowledge that the eco-guide and eco-chic segments have. Yet they firmly believe that climate change is real, which are all characteristics of the Concerned segment. They tend to be politically engaged but with other issues such as
human rights and social progress on a global scale. This is where the eco-companion overlaps with the Hip-ennial. Moreover, the eco-companion segment does not actively engage with green products and does not consider sustainability a major factor in purchasing. Sustainability is more of a secondary purchase driver, connecting the eco-companion with the Inconsistent Consumer.

Riley Connolly is the archetype for the eco-companion and the following additional characteristic are derived from her interview. The eco-companion is heavily influenced by their peer group when it comes to purchase decisions and individuals like the eco-chic are a reference for them. When it comes to green purchasing, the eco-companion will follow the lead of the eco-chic, even if sustainability and the environment are not personal priorities.

“[I consider sustainability] a little bit. It’s definitely not a top priority and I don’t actively seek it out” (Connolly).

“I think that peer pressure really is important. So if it’s important to my friends it will become more important to me. Trust is also important to me so when I see a company working hard and investing not just in their own personal gain but in their customers and the world, I think that gives you a good feeling in your stomach” (Connolly).

This again illustrates the overlap with the Inconsistent Consumer segment. Importantly, the eco-companion has the ability to follow the eco-chic and is not normally held back by barriers such as price or convenience. They will wait to make purchases until a sale comes around and are not as concerned with fast fashion or trendiness as the eco-chic is.
“I also am a huge bargain shopper so I don’t like their store brand things but I’ll buy the expensive brand name things when they are on sale. So price is important to me but I tend to buy the higher end things and the brands I trust” (Connolly).

Because green purchasing is not a common behavior for the eco-companion and they are not actively engaged with environmental issues, the attitude-behavior gap is not significant here. Eco-companions are aware of greenwashing but it does not have a strong impact on them because of their low involvement with green products. Therefore, it is recommended that the eco-companion’s reference and peer groups (such as the eco-chic and the eco-guide) are targeted with green messaging. If the eco-companion feels the group is moving towards green purchasing, it is likely that they will follow.

The Gapper

The gapper segment is comprised of characteristics from the Concerned and Inconsistent Consumer segments, combined with defining characteristics found through the interviews. The gapper segment is where I found the attitude-behavior gap was the most prevalent. This segment was also the largest that I found through the interviews. The gappers are characterized by desiring the ability to purchase sustainable and green products, but have barriers to overcome to get there. Whereas the demand for green products exists, the behavior often does not. This identifies gappers with the Inconsistent Consumer segment. They would like to have the purchase abilities of the eco-chic but factors like price and convenience get in the way.
This segment believes that climate change is real and that individuals have the ability to help solve environmental problems. Although this segment believes in climate change, they do not have a good grasp of the science and arguments that support climate change. They believe in the scientific community’s assessment but do not fully understand it. The belief but lack of engagement identifies the gappers with the Concerned segment.

Amy Cañada is the archetype of the gapper segment and the following additional characteristics were derived from her interview. The gapper segment does not understand the concept of greenwashing and have trouble distinguishing truly sustainable and green products from greenwashed one. Gappers believe that they can make a difference and want to make a difference, but a lack of information stands in their way.

“Yeah, honestly in LA a lot of it is posh. Yeah if I could afford it I would live that life but those aren't luxuries that I have. So honestly, that how I feel about it, that it is a luxury. I would like to make it a priority but just haven’t. I feel like those products are more expensive in general but better made and better quality” (Cañada).

Gappers tend to shop at non-specialty grocery stores and supercenters like Walmart. They want to make green purchasing a priority but don’t feel like they can because the lifestyle seems out of reach. Gappers will occasionally splurge on more expensive products, but price is usually a key purchase factor.

“I mostly look for price and then quality and then brand when I shop. I usually shop at Trader Joe’s or Walmart” (Cañada).
I believe this is the segment of college-aged millennials that has the most potential to make a change through consumerism. It is a large segment that is mostly being held back by a lack of trustworthy information. The attitude-behavior gap is most evident here and I believe it can be overcome by providing tools and information about what constitutes a sustainable and green product. Moreover, lowering the barriers to entry around price and availability for this segment should increase green purchasing in college-aged millennials. The gapper segment needs to be engaged both in-store and out of store with information around certifications, the environmental impact of certain products, and the ways that individual consumers can make an impact through their purchases.

Notes on the Eco-Millennial Model

The four segments of the Eco-Millennial Model are not rigid and a single consumer can possess characteristic from more than one segment. The diversity of the millennial generation makes it difficult to make absolute statements. The model represents archetypes of sustainable-minded consumers and should be viewed a flexible. The model is built from existing research combined with personal interviews and is the first to specifically address college-aged millennials who engage with green purchasing to given degrees.

Millennials who are not engaged with sustainability or green purchasing were not included in this model. An entirely separate segmentation model could be built for these consumer around why they do not engage with green purchasing. The Eco-Millennial Model is meant for consumers who have some level of engagement around green purchasing because they
already have a “foot in the door” and will hopefully be more receptive to increased green messaging.
Chapter 5: Exploration of purchase drivers contributing to the model

Six major factors were identified through the interview analyses that had an influence on college-aged millennials’ purchase of green products: perceived quality, price, convenience and availability of products, political and environmental views, available information on sustainable products, and product certifications. Each one of these factors contributes to the attitude-behavior gap in green purchasing and are described in the following sections. Furthermore, each factor impacts different segments of the Eco-Millennial Model to varying degrees.

Available Information

A major factor identified through the interview process was a lack of knowledge around what constituted a sustainably sourced or green product. Each student that was interviewed self-identified as believing that climate change is real and of having a desire to reduce their environmental impact. Many students interviewed had considered the idea of purchasing sustainably sourced products in the past; however, a major hindrance to doing so was an inability to distinguish between true green products and greenwashed products.

The gapper segmentation is the most impacted by the lack of available and trustworthy information. As found in the interviews and previous research, gappers believe climate change is real but do not have an understanding of the science behind it. Furthermore, they have trouble distinguishing between greenwashed products and actual green products.
“I think if there was info on the shelves or on the packaging that I knew was true, it would make me want to buy it. It’s unrealistic, but if every shelf just had a list of what was better for the environment and what was bad, that would be awesome” (Daley).

“I think more information is a solution. I don’t feel like I have enough information to make informed decisions about buying sustainably sourced products and so I don’t buy them. I had a situation last semester--I’m in science and I live on a farm--I understand how meat, eggs, all of that works. But I was in a lecture about vaccinations for the flu and I just never realized how the egg industry worked. And so now I will usually buy free range eggs because of the conditions I saw and from talking to these people” (Marek).

“I don’t think half the students on this campus know what sustainability even means. Or if they do, they would not associate with food or clothes, they would associate it with climate” (Cannillo).

The lack of readily available information contributes to the attitude-behavior gap in green purchasing for college-aged millennials. Eco-labels and certifications such as fair trade, organic, and locally sourced were cited as a main indicator of a green or sustainable product. Interviewees used these certifications and labels as a source of information. Interviewees generally did not take the time to research products before they shopped and did not feel that there was adequate information in stores or on product labels. The minimal information search, mainly by the gapper segment, can be attributed to other purchase constraints. The gapper segment is mostly concerned with price and is limited on possible shopping locations because of price. The information search for lowest price and convenience competes with time for green product
search. On the opposite end of the spectrum, eco-guides priority is finding green products and so they prioritize that information search.

Quality

Quality was a factor that was mentioned by all interviewees and has an impact on each segment. Quality tended to be more important for high involvement purchases such as clothing and electronics. When asked specifically about any notions interviewees had about sustainable sourced products, several comments were made about quality. All comments made about sustainable product’s qualities were positive, which means that interviewees belief that sustainable products are of a higher quality.

“When I think about sustainable products, the new Adidas ocean plastic sneakers are what I think of first. I’ve heard that they are some of the best shoes you can buy quality wise…so I would say sustainable products are usually good quality” (Rameau).

“I think that [sustainable products] are of higher quality...My number one thing would be quality followed by price because I want to make sure that the clothes I’m going to be wearing are going to last and then followed by price” (Cannillo)

“If a company is going to take the time to make a product that is good for the environment, they are probably going to make sure that it is made well” (Cañada).

The perception that sustainable goods are of higher quality has benefits and drawbacks. The Boston Consulting Group found in a study of American consumers, that 43% thought that
green products were of higher quality, versus 5% who thought they were of a lower quality (Manget, 2009), and that perceived high quality is good for eco-chics and others who can afford high quality items. For the gapper segment, the combination of perceived high quality and high price makes sustainable products seem out of reach. This idea is explored more in the section of price.

**Price**

Of all the factors contributing to purchase behavior, price was the least consistent between interviews. For some interviewees, price was the most important factor when shopping and for other it was the least important. Most interviewees were dependent on their parents for money to purchase groceries, which greatly influenced what products they were able to buy. Many interviewees responded that they were responsible for financing larger purchases such as clothing and electronics, giving them more control over their price range. Interviewees were not asked about their income levels.

Price plays a defining role in the segmentation model and has the greatest impact on the gapper segment. It also impacts the eco-guide and eco-companion segments to a lesser extent. The eco-chic segment tends to be the least price sensitive and is minimally impacted by price. Price is interconnected with other factors major in the model. It can restrict where a consumer shops, the level of quality a consumer perceives they can afford, and the amount of time they spend considering other factors, such as sustainability. Select quotes about how price impacts purchase decisions are as follows.
“I mostly look for price and then quality and then brand when I shop. I usually shop at Trader Joe’s or Walmart, which is depressing” (Cañada).

“If I wasn’t a poor college student, my number one choice would be Wegmans, but right now I shop at Trader Joe’s and Walmart” (Cannillo).

The above two quotes represent how the gapper segment’s shopping habits are constrained by price. It highlights one of the key features of the gapper segment, which is the desire to be able to afford products that segments like the eco-chic purchases. However, they are limited in their choice of store and in their information search for green products.

When asked about any notions interviewees have about sustainable products, a higher price tended to be associated with such goods. This notion corresponds to the idea that sustainable goods are of a higher quality, and the combination of the two makes sustainable good seems out of reach to some college-aged millennials. The quotes below help illustrate how the perceived higher quality and price premium on green products has contributed to the attitude-behavior gap by creating an idea that green products are out of reach. For example, “I think a lot of people think that [green products] are either bourgeois or out of reach” (Rameau).

“I think that [green products] tend to be associated with a kind of hip, urban lifestyle. You know, the kind of people that shop at Wholefoods and spends half their day in juice bars. I think the whole idea of green products seems a bit elitist, even though I know they’re actually good things” (Misera).
“Yeah, honestly in Los Angeles a lot of it is posh. Yeah if I could afford it I would live that life but those aren't luxuries that I have. So honestly, that how I feel about it, that it is a luxury” (Cañada).

However, just because a product is green, it does not have to be more expensive. Figure 4 is an example of a green product and a normal product that have the same price. Finding ways to overcome the perception that green products are out of reach is vital for engaging the gapper segment with more green purchasing.

![Figure 4: Two non-scratch Scotch-Brite sponges are compared with the same price. Found on Target.com](image)

**Certifications**

Certifications are a vital source of information for the eco-guide segment. They have an impact on the eco-chic segment as well, but it is not as strong. Certifications are administered by independent, third party organizations that review a products supply chain, manufacturing process, quality, or ingredients. If the product meets the standards of the organization, that
product is allowed to be certified under the organization's name and use its labeling (Jaffee & Howard, 2016).

Certifications were one of the highest mentioned sources of information that interviewees used to make green purchase decision. Without prompting, interviewees spoke about how certifications can influence them to purchase a certain product. Certain consumers are aware of the idea of greenwashing and use certifications to identify products that they believe fit their standards.

“I think organic certified [influences my purchase decision] because it means the same thing regardless of what the brand is, and so I appreciate that. I’m wary of greenwashing and so I think that's why I don’t align with brands but more certifications” (Mitchell).

Similarly, certifications can have a larger influence than the price of the product.

“...when I do I try to look for brand names and qualities. And certain certifications over price” (Rameau).

However, certifications are only effective if consumers believe in the certification and the institution supporting it. Interviewees spoke about how distrust in certifications, specifically Fair Trade, lead them to purchase alternative products. Although interviewees mentioned losing faith in certain certifications because of negative information that came out about the certifications, they tend to believe that some form of certification is better than none.
“I also use to buy Fair Trade coffee because it was better for the environment and the people who produced coffee, but then I read a bunch of articles about how all of that wasn’t true so I didn’t feel inclined to keep buying it” (Daley).

“Even with certifications like Fair Trade and Fair Labor, that kind of stuff isn’t necessarily true because of all the different tiers in the supply chain. So I’m skeptical but I trust at least having that on there over something that doesn’t have it for now” (Rameau).

**Convenience**

Convenience was a commonly cited reason for not purchasing green or sustainable products, meaning that interviewees did not feel that such products were readily available in the stores they shop at. Convenience impacts different segments in different ways. The eco-guide segment’s preference for local products can limit where they shop and purchase green products.

“I shop at the local farmer’s markets and purchase from Friend and Farmers Co-Op, which conglomerates local produce growers. So local grown is my primary priority” (Mitchell).

“When I’m out of State College, I shop at Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s and any other assorted fresh markets that I can find along the way” (Rameau).
Because farmer’s markets and specialized grocery stores like Whole Foods are either unavailable in State College or are seasonal, eco-guides and eco-chics can be limited in where they purchase green products. Some interviewees in these segments felt that they wanted to purchase green or sustainable products but did not have access to them.

As covered in the price category, gappers and eco-companions can be limited in where they shop. If green products are not conveniently located in the stores they shop in, the likelihood that they engage in green purchasing is low. Expanding the venues that green products are readily available in is an important step to increasing green purchasing in these segments.

**Political Identity**

Contrary to my expectations and existing research, a strong relationship between political identity and green purchasing was not found. During the interviews, participants were asked how they identified politically. This included if they were a part of a political party and how their beliefs applied to social and fiscal matters. Socially conservative can be defined as desiring the preservation of traditional human values, and includes a belief in traditional marriage between a man and a woman and pro-life beliefs (Everett, 2013). Economic or fiscally conservative can be defined by beliefs such as keeping government small, taxes low, and minimizing regulations on private companies (Everett, 2013). Socially fiscal and social are the opposite and include beliefs like pro-choice, gay marriage, regulation of private companies, and an increased role for the government (Everett, 2013).
Interviewees who identified as socially and fiscally progressive were likely to be in either the eco-guide or gapper segment, depending on their level of engagement and knowledge of climate change and environmental issues.

“I identify and I am registered in the Democratic Party, but I think I’m usually on the left side of that party. I’m very liberal and I think that a lot of times I want to push Centralist Democrats to the left…I definitely think climate change is a big issue” (Connolly).

Interviewees who identified as socially progressive and fiscally conservative were equally represented in the eco-chic and the eco-companion segments.

“I probably fall more in the moderate sense of things. I’m not really leaning towards Republican or Democrat more. I think I’m different if we are talking about fiscal or social issues. I lean different ways. Socially I’m more liberal, fiscally I’m a little more conservative…I believe climate change is real” (Marek).

Interviewees who were socially and fiscally conservative all identified as believing in climate change. Both interviewees with conservative identities were primarily associated with the eco-companion segment.

“I would describe myself ideologically as a Republican. I would say that I on many issues when it comes fiscal and some social issues I start at the middle on the issue…I think that
climate change exists all around us in terms of global temperatures rising and weather patterns changing because of it” (Misera).
Chapter 6 Patagonia Case Study

Introduction

An analysis of Patagonia was conducted to connect a company rooted in sustainability to the Eco-Millennial Model. Patagonia has been a leader in sustainability since its conception, and it can serve as an application for the new Eco-Millennial Model. An overview of Patagonia’s business strategy is provided to give a background on the company and why it is considered a sustainability leader. Patagonia’s print catalogs and online store were analyzed for content and messaging around sustainability and then applied to the Eco-Millennial Model.

I began the case study by researching Patagonia’s history and current strategy. I looked at their market performance, latest developments, and competition. I then contacted Patagonia and spoke to a company representative. I explained the topic of my thesis and asked if I could have copies of their previous catalogs to analyze. They send me the two most recent catalogs and a special magazine about their latest wetsuit development. These three pieces were analyzed by studying the use of language, content, color, layout, and images. Similarly, I explored the online store and studied the same factors in that medium.

Lastly, I applied by findings from the print and online resources to the Eco-Millennial model by connecting the content Patagonia produces to what each segment of the model looks for and values. I found that Patagonia targets and appeals to different segments through their various channels and has a fairly well-rounded approach that fits the Eco-Millennial model well.
Patagonia’s Strategy

According to the Patagonia website, the company’s mission statement reads “Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis” (Our Business and Climate Change). The mission statement mentions nothing about clothing, apparel, or outdoor gear, which are the core of Patagonia’s business. At face value, the mission statement would almost make it seem that the company produces products that directly help the environment like solar panels or ocean cleaning products. Patagonia’s mission statement is a clear indicator of how firmly rooted in sustainability and environmental protection the company is.

Patagonia has a wide approach to climate change, including reducing the impact that the company and its supply chain has on the environment, paying an Earth Tax that supports grassroots activists, advocating for systemic change, having programs in place that can repair products consumers bought, supporting sustainable agriculture, and trying to revolutionize the apparel industry to be eco-friendlier (Our Business and Climate Change). Patagonia’s approach is unique because it is a founding principal of the company, not something that was later incorporated into the business structure. Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia, said in an interview that “The capitalist ideal is you grow a company and focus on making it as profitable as possible. Then, when you cash out, you become a philanthropist. We believe a company has a responsibility to do that all along- for the sake of the employees, for the sake of the planet” (Yvon Chouinard as cited by Nick Paumgarten). Chouinard founded the company with strong principals of sustainability and philanthropy and those principals continue to guide the company today.
According to Rose Marcario, President and CEO of Patagonia, the company donated all 2016 Black Friday profits to environmental non-profit groups, which totaled to over $10 million. The company estimated profits of approximately $2 million, making the Black Friday sale a testament to the swelling support of environmental causes. The Black Friday donation is an addition to the 1% of all annual revenues that Patagonia donates to such non-profits (Marcario 2016). Several grants have been issued to local agencies in central Pennsylvania, including Shaver's Creek, the Mid State Trail Association, and Millbrook Marsh Nature Area. Patagonia has been a member of the 1% For the Planet organization for since 1985 and has donated more than $100 million to environmental groups (Pennsylvania Grantees, 2016).

![Graph showing interest over time for REI and Patagonia](image)

Figure 5: Google Trends comparing interest in the search terms REI and Patagonia over the last 5 years. REI is in blue and Patagonia is in red. Search peaks around Black Friday every year. Patagonia surpassed REI in 2016 when all profits were donated to environmental non-profits (Google, 2017).

According to the IBISWorld Industry Report on Hiking and Outdoor Equipment prepared by Andrew Alvarez, Patagonia holds 12.7% of that industry and has seen significant growth over the last six years. Alvarez concludes that Patagonia’s environmental and sustainability policies have increased the company’s sales and gained overwhelming consumer response. Furthermore,
Alvarez cites Patagonia’s major competitors as REI, with 40.9% of the market, and VF Corporation (North Face, Vans, Nautica), with 10.8% of the market (Alvarez, 2016).

Analysis of Print Materials

I found that Patagonia was consistent with its messaging around sustainability and environmental protections in the paper catalogs. The catalogs were strong examples of content marketing. Each issue centered around a theme and was full of stories by Patagonia employees and users of Patagonia’s gear. The January 2017 catalog’s theme was skiing and snowboarding and featured high resolution photographs of ski scenes, stories from professional skiers and snowboarders, and product offerings mixed in. At the bottom of several pages were descriptions of how Patagonia is using recycled and reused materials in their new product offerings.

Figure 6: Covers of the 2 print catalogs and the Yulex story.
The August 2016 print piece was not a catalog but a narrative on Patagonia’s development of Yulex, a sustainable replacement for traditional wetsuit materials. This issue is the kind of material that eco-guides look for. It is content driven and goes into great detail about how the new material is better for the environment and the people who produce the suits. This issue offered no prices or direct sales invitations; instead, it focused solely on how the new wetsuits are better for the environment that the people making them.

The magazines utilize color in various ways. First, Patagonia connects the colors of its products to the images of nature throughout the catalog. An example of this is Figure XX. The skier in the picture is wearing the red jacket shown on the left side of the spread. The skier and their jacket are dwarfed by the size of the mountain, showing that the environment is the main focus of the message. Patagonia’s physical clothing is only a small part of the message.
Secondly, all of the pages dedicated to product offerings are white. This gives them a minimalistic look that focuses on the fashionable qualities of the product. The bright colors of the clothing and gear and starkly contrasted to the white backgrounds. This helps the product to stand out on the page and also makes it easy for the viewer to connect the product’s color to the colors used in the high resolution pictures of nature scenes. This can be seen in Figure XX.
Third, the catalogs make ample use of earthy colors on pages that are not dedicated to products. This gives the entire catalog a natural feel due to the many shades of brown, green, orange, and blue. The earthy tones are often dark, which again helps contrast the bright and vibrant colors of the product. A good example of this contrast of bright product colors and earthy background colors is Figure XX.
Figure 10: Bright yellow and orange on the product are contrasted with the dark, earthy tones of nature.
The language of the magazines contains jargon from the different recreational sports like surfing, mountain climbing, and skiing. This is combined with a significant amount of language around sustainability, such as recycled, organic, reused, and names of certifications. Product names include Refugitive, Reconnaissance, Acensionist, Technical Fleece, and R1, which sound aspirational and adventurous. The rest of the language is dedicated to product features, such as lightweight, durable, waterproof, versatile, and breathable.

The layout of both catalogs follows a pattern. The beginning of the catalog is a four-page story about an outdoor adventurer. These biographical narratives and stories about individuals who use Patagonia products include full page images of the sport or individual. The writing is first-person and tells engaging stories about adventure and danger. One is about a snowboarder stuck on a mountain in a blizzard and another about a sailor who became a climate change activist after spending years watching the ocean environment change.

The initial stories are followed by two pages of products, then double pages of images without products in them. These full images are followed by one page of products, contrasted with a full page picture of a sport of nature. Then the layout repeats itself by starting with another full length story.

The actual content of the catalogs is interesting because the focus does not seem to be on the actual products. There are pages dedicated just to showing the different clothing and gear items, but a large portion of the catalogs is striking, full-page pictures of nature scenes and individuals engaged in different outdoor recreations. Oftentimes, the pictures do not even include a Patagonia product. The stories included in the catalogs are almost exclusively void of any mention of Patagonia products. Instead, the focus on topics like climate change activists,
preservation of recreation areas that have been abused, and stories of action and adventure. They are highly engaging, informative, and aspirational. It makes you want to grab a surf board or strap on a backpack and go adventuring. An example of an adventure narrative can be seen in Figure XX.

Figure 11: Two page narrative in the Summer 2016 catalog.

Analysis of the Online Store

The online store was analyzed as a complement to the paper catalogs. The online store represented Patagonia’s mission statement and brand. Almost every single product offering included how it was either sustainably sourced, supported fair trade, or reduced the impact on the environment. The store had a section dedicated to all of their Fair Trade certified products.

Patagonia offers a wealth of information about sustainable practices, how to reduce environmental harm, and provides consumers with actionable ways to contribute to making the
world a better place. Patagonia bridges the gap between local and global consumerism through the “New Localism” project that they run. Consumers have the ability to see areas of the world that need environmental help. There are full length documentaries available for each location, petitions to be signed, and the opportunity to support the protection of these place by either purchasing from Patagonia or donating directly to nonprofits. Furthermore, the company tells of its own local roots and how it has stuck to its principals as it grew.

The online store different from the magazine is a few ways. First, the product descriptions focused much more on sustainability than they did in the catalogs. I believe this is because the catalogs can partner with products with full stories and images around the environment and sustainability, but the online store has to place those on different webpages than where consumers shop. Second, the online store makes less use of non-product images. Again, this type of content is kept elsewhere on the Patagonia site. The language and use of color is very similar between the online store and the print catalogs. The online store also offers an extensive book and video selection under the tab “Stories that Inspire.” These stories include a large number of books and DVDs about environmental issues and what can be done for them.

The website has two major sections: “Shop” and “Inside Patagonia.” “Inside Patagonia” contains a wealth of information about the company, the environmental and sustainability initiative, and resources that consumers can use to take action or learn more about the issues. The variety of available information can be seen in Figure XX.
Application of the Segmentation Model

Patagonia’s online store and their special Yulex story have great appeal for the eco-guide segment. The story about the development of Yulex is all about engaging with consumers who are truly passionate about protecting the environment and search for content like this. The piece is 43 pages long and full of first-person accounts of Yulex’s development, stories from local producers of natural rubber, and full page images of the rubber trees and the people who make the product. Because eco-guides are aware of greenwashing and look for it, content like this is extremely important because of the level of detail and obvious commitment that Patagonia has put into the issue.

Furthermore, the issue refers to the Rainforest Alliance and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which are two certification organizations. Certifications are a key information
source for eco-guides and the special edition makes references to such certifications and organizations throughout. They even dedicate full page images and stories about the certifications, such as Figure XX.

![FSC & Rainforest Alliance Certified](image)

Figure 13: Patagonia has all of its rubber certified by the FSC and Rainforest Alliance.

The colors of the magazine are all blues, greens, browns, and other earthy qualities that one might associate with the nature. The colors, combined with full page images of trees and nature, make the Yulex edition very appealing to eco-guides who have high levels of engagement with the environment. The edition is both visually appealing to the eco-guide segment and contains trustworthy and valuable information for them. An example of two full pages dedicated to trees and void of any Patagonia products can be seen in Figure XX.
Figure 14: Two pages dedicated to a picture of the forest.

The online store also offers appeal to the eco-guide segment. Patagonia bridges the gap between local and global consumerism through the “New Localism” project that they run. Consumers have the ability to see areas of the world that need environmental help. There are full length documentaries available for each location, petitions to be signed, and the opportunity to support the protection of these places by either purchasing from Patagonia or donating directly to nonprofits. Furthermore, the company tells of its own local roots and how it has stuck to its principals as it grew. The company continues to care about the issues that are important to eco-guides. A visual of the “New Localism” can be seen in Figure XX.
Finally, eco-guides are drawn to the overall mission and stance that Patagonia has taken. The Earth Tax or 1% for the Planet is included in all of Patagonia’s messaging, proving that environmentalism is something they are dedicated to. This is a shared interest between eco-guides and Patagonia that makes the company appealing to eco-guides. The catalogs make mention of 1% for the Planet, along with numerous references to sustainable practices that Patagonia has in place. Examples of this language and content can be found in Figure XX and Figure XY.
Figure 16: Patagonia donates 1% of all profits to environmental protections.

Figure 17: Catalogs make numerous references to recycled material in the clothing as well as the magazine itself.
In my analysis, I found that eco-chics were mostly targeted through the use of catalogs. This appeal comes from Patagonia's catalogs. The two issues analyzed briefly touch on topics of sustainability but it is not a focal point like the Yulex story or the online store. The catalogs highlight the fashion of the products and the adventures that can come from using them. As referenced in the model, the eco-chic segment is most interested in fashion and adventure, two points that Patagonia exemplifies in the print catalogs. Patagonia does this through the biographical narratives and stories about individuals who use Patagonia products. The stories highlight the adventurous type of people that use Patagonia products, which can be appealing to the eco-chic segment.

The language used in the magazine, especially product names, are also an appeal to the eco-chic segment. Product names include Refugitive, Reconnaissance, Acensionist, Technical Fleece, and R1. These names sound both aspirational and adventurous, which again are qualities that appeal to the eco-chic segment. In addition, the colors of the products used highlight the latest fashion and are easy to pick out on the white backgrounds. Many of the spreads, such as Figure XX, show a variety of colors and options that the eco-chic can choose from. The appeal for the eco-chic segment has less to do with the sustainability side of Patagonia, and more with the fashion and sense of adventure the company offers.

The gapper segment is the last to be directly targeted. The sheer amount of information and learning tools that Patagonia offers, combined with the ease of access, makes it ideal for communicating and educating gappers. Gappers can find information about how their purchase is making a difference at the point of sale because Patagonia includes it in the description of each of their products. Moreover, gappers can explore deeper on their own by using the array of
articles, videos, and links to environmental nonprofits. Examples of how Patagonia incorporates sustainability into product descriptions can be found in Figure XX.

![Product Description Example](image)

Figure 18: Patagonia includes language in each product description about how the product is sustainable, which is good for gappers.

The company offers a variety of free documentaries and learning tools that can be used by consumers to educate themselves and find ways to become involved in the sustainability movement. I did not find the print catalogs to have a strong appeal to gappers because a lot of the language the catalogs used was technical or jargon from the different recreational sports.

Lastly, the eco-companion segment is indirectly drawn to Patagonia. Obsevationally, I have noticed that a significant portion of student at Penn State own Patagonia apparel. I don’t not believe that the majority of these students are eco-guides or eco-chics, but rather either eco-companions who have been influenced by peer groups to purchase Patagonoa, or individuals who fall outside of the Eco-
Millennial Model. Further research would be needed to determine who constitutes the rest of Patagonia purchases in college-aged student. However, I do believe that the eco-companion segment is likely influenced by eco-guides and ec-chics who believe in the Patagonia brand and its commitment to the environment.
Chapter 7 : Conclusion

This thesis addressed the factors that drive green purchasing is college-aged millennials, as well as the factors that contribute to the attitude-behavior gap around green purchasing. Interviews were conducted with students at the Pennsylvania State University to learn how they interacted and engaged with sustainability and corresponding purchase behavior. The finding from the interviews was combined with three existing segmentation models to create the Eco-Millennial Segmentation Model, which is the first to address sustainably minded millennial consumers. Finally, a case study on Patagonia was conducted because it is a key player in sustainable consumerism and it could serve as an application of the Eco-Millennial Model.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the interviews that were conducted for the purpose of this research. Although a representative sample of college-aged millennials was the goal of this research, several factors inhibited its scope. The interviews were limited to the student body of Penn State, which does not fully represent the population of college students in the United States. Students interviewed did come from a range of geographic locations in the United States, ranging from California, to New York, to Texas. Interviewees came from both urban and rural backgrounds; however, the majority were from urban and suburban areas. Furthermore, more interviews were conducted with self-identified progressives than conservatives, although attempts were made to include equal representation of political beliefs and identities. It was
challenging to find individuals who leaned far to the right, with most interviewees having moderate political beliefs. The number of interviews conducted also limited the scope of the research. The time commitment for each interview and the corresponding transcription and analysis of each interview limited the number conducted.

**Recommended Future Research**

A quantitative study on the size of the four segments in the model is a logical next step. The interview process was useful for identifying the segments and their characteristics, but it would be useful to know how large each segment is. Additionally, a deeper dive into the factors of price, quality, informational availability, and convenience with a broader set of respondents would help to confirm that they have an impact on green purchase behavior. Perceived effectiveness is a factor that has been suggested in previous studies but not found in this one. This is an area worth investigating.

This thesis and corresponding segmentation model focus on millennials who have engaged with green purchasing before. Research on millennials who are not involved with topics of sustainability and green purchasing is needed in the future. Moreover, researching how to target and appeal to eco-millennials who have low involvement with green purchasing will be important in the future.

Marketing seems to be moving into a new realm that focuses on more that targeting certain lifestyles. Consumers’ core values are changing and sustainability is playing a key role in that. Future research on how physical products and the messaging around them are changing to meet this change in consumer expectations is needed. Furthermore, research on the effect of
documentaries like *Food Inc.* and *Business Not as Usual* would help marketers understand how consumer’s react to third party information that addresses unsustainable practices. Millennials are an information hungry generation and several interviewees mentioned getting information about products through exposés and documentaries. Moreover, an experiment involving placing informational resources on store shelves, such as a list of sustainable products on a given shelf, could provide support for retailers and manufactures to increase their green messaging. It would be interesting to see if it increases the sales of green products.

Lastly, although the attempt of this research was to segment the college-aged millennial population based on political identity, no conclusive findings came from this factor. I still believe that with a larger sample, the population of college-aged millennials can be segmented based on political identity. My research showed that social issues outweighed fiscal issues in the students I interviewed, but the small sample size could be misleading. Climate change is both a social and fiscal issue and I believe that further research on political identity could shed light on green purchase behavior.
Chapter 8 Appendix A: Sample Interview with Sara Mitchell

**J:** How would you describe your political identity/ beliefs?

**S:** I would say that I lean liberal considerably, but I do have a lot of stock in local government and investing in local economies. Traditionally that might be a little away from true liberal ideology but I think it is a good balance that might pull me a little more near center.

**J:** Building on that, what are your general thoughts on climate change and energy use?

**S:** Yeah so climate change is real and it's caused by human activity. As a plant scientist I’ve spent that last 4 years understanding ecology and how human interaction with ecosystems has progressed climate change and how now those ecosystems are being affected. I’m a fan of local govt action but this is a global issue so our federal govt should partner with other international governments and institutions to set regulations that state and local governments are mandated to meet and if that looks like a carbon tax then I’m a fan of that.

**J:** Can you think of any brands that you connect with and why?

**S:** Yeah, so this is interesting. This is a little more difficult for me because I don’t really subscribe to brands when purchasing personal goods like clothes and things that you normally associate brands with. I think that when I put like a lot of thought and power into purchases that I’m making and power of the dollar, it’s more food. And so brand power isn’t as big of a deal to me in that realm as certifications are. So understanding certified organic was a big thing for me and that sometimes translates into the food or beyond the food realm with fair trade certified and if you buying international products (clothing or goods). I think brands are something that I want
to be better at. I buy a lot of second hand and so that a way that I approach brand identity by trying to be more sustainable in my purchases. I want to learn more about how the companies I’m investing in are socially responsible and a great example of that is that I previously avoided purchasing Starbucks coffee because I liked to support local growers or local businesses who sell coffee, but since the immigrant worker strike and the news about refugees in the US, Starbucks has made a commitment to supporting that population and so I feel more comfortable purchasing Starbucks.

**J:** When you’re purchasing groceries and household items, what are you looking for? What’s important to you?

**S:** I go to Wegmans, Giant, and Trader Joe's for produce. I also shop at the local farmers markets and purchase from Friend and Farmers Co-Op, which conglomerates local produce growers. So local grown is my primary priority. And then when I do go to a grocery store for fresh foods and vegetables I always go for certified organic if it’s there and that's because of my studies as an ecologist. I know that certified organic doesn’t necessarily mean that it’s healthier than me but it is healthier for the environment and the people that invested in growing that produce have also invested in the ecosystem that they are growing in and so that’s really important to me. Words like natural and naturally grown mean nothing to me but certifications like Non GMO are counterproductive to understanding the environment. And then there are things like PA Preferred that I really like because it’s an indication of locally grown certification. There’s the Sustainability Institute and that’s a pretty good certification. For me, I’m willing to pay extra for fresh food that is organically grown. In terms of processed foods like pasta noodles, I won’t pay extra for that.
J: When you go to purchase larger items like clothing or electronics, what qualities are important to you?

S: I use to go to H&M but I recently learned that their worker rights are not up to my standards so I’m actually stopping shopping there. Besides that I tend to shop at TJ Maxx and Marshall’s, which are a mix of a lot of brands. And when I do treat myself that way, I still feel like I’m helping to reduce waste because those garments are still “second hand” in the way that they are further down the production line and they may have been discarded otherwise. I like Target. They’ve really been out there pushing a lot of limits in terms of gender bending. They’ve been pretty outspoken.

J: How do you thinking green products and sustainability impact your purchase decisions? You’ve covered this a bit, is there anything else you would like to add?

S: Yeah, I think I’m really wary. I think organic certified because it means the same thing regardless of what the brand is, and so I appreciate that. I’m wary of greenwashing and so I think that's why I don’t align with brands but more certifications. Greenwashing is huge issue and it’s exploiting people’s lack of knowledge around social and environmental sustainability. And so I know what sustainability means to be, certified organic for instance, and that’s what I will align with rather than walking through the aisle and seeing “naturally grown”. That wouldn’t change my mind because I haven’t investigated that claim beforehand. I make sure to do my homework before in order to prioritize my purchases, rather than when I’m walking through the aisles being swayed by other messaging. I try to walk that line and be good about it.
J: Do you ever feel like you want to purchase something green or sustainable but you end up going with a regular alternative? Why would that be?

S: Milk for me- I always want to buy organic and local if I can but those for some reason are a little more expensive than I want to pay. I want to support international business but I can’t investigate as well as I can with local. I want to support sustainable international operations but there are some barriers to learning.

J: The purpose behind all of this is to figure out why drives sustainable purchasing in college students. Do you have any ideas of what could increase sustainable purchasing in college student?

S: That's so hard. I think I’ve come to my standards through 4+years of education about what organic means, what non GMO means, what sustainable alliance means, so that's really what my classes focus on, a standard of sustainability. I certainly don't expect consumers around the world to take 4 years of their lives to create a standard for themselves. The buzzwords and greenwashing make it so confusing. I think the best thing to do when you walk into a store have you previously thought about what your values and what you want to support? And then going into that store, how do those things align? But most people haven’t even done the first step of what do you care about and what are you supporting. If you do that, you’re more likely to do the homework beforehand. If people had a personal manifesto of what they believe in and what they support, that's a first step that really helps. That’s why I’m so local. Take Pepsi for instance. Pepsi does a lot of iffy things but they do a lot of good things too. They support small international farmers, which I love. But when I send my dollar to Pepsi, I don’t know which
route it's going. When I opt local, it’s easier for me to track that dollar and hopefully see it return to the local community.

It’s also realizing that all of social causes are related. Like if you think you’re an environmentalist but you don’t believe in women’s rights, then you’re not. If you’re a women’s rights activist but you don’t care about Black Lives Matter, then you’re not. If you think you’re a Civil Right Activist but you don’t care about indigenous rights, then you’re not. So as an ecologist, I need to care about these other social causes.
Chapter 9 : Bibliography


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ACADEMIC VITA

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Education
The Pennsylvania State University
Bachelor of Science in Marketing, minor in Sexuality and Gender Studies
Schreyer Honors College, Dean’s List 5/6 Semesters

Work Experience
Unilever, Englewood Cliffs, NJ
Global Brand Development Intern for Dove Skin Cleansing  June 2016- August 2016
- Analyzed the use of emotional and functional advertising in past and current marketing campaigns for core Bar and Body Wash to identify opportunities for stronger future campaigns.
- Worked closely with brand development, brand building, CMI, research firms, and creative agencies to fully understand the business.
- Identified inefficiencies in the integration of core Bar and Body Wash products in the current communications model and made recommendations to improve efficiency in the future.

Juniata Valley Winery, Mifflin, PA
Sales and Design  April 2013-present
- Treasurer managed and ran the tasting room in the winery, as well as traveled to festivals to market and sell the wine to a larger customer base. Festivals would bring up to $20,000.
- Participated in the wine making process from start to finish by carring the grapes, helping make the wine, bottling and labeling, and selling the final product.
- Aided in coordinating and marketing the One Year Anniversary Festival, which brought in over $12,000 in one weekend.
- Designed signs and ads for the winery and promoted events throughout the year.

The LGBTQA Student Resource Center, University Park, PA
Summer Intern  June 2015-August 2015
- Engaged with alumni across the country to promote gatherings in Pittsburgh and NYC, to build the Center’s Alumni Network.
- Managed social media avenues weekly, namely Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr and reached a few hundred subscribers.
- Influenced hiring process of Program Coordinator by serving on university search committee.
- Designed & promotional flyers, buttons, and 2 display boards for the Center.

Sensory Evaluation Center, University Park, PA
Research Assistant  August 2013-present
- Worked directly with professional and graduate student researchers to understand how to build an experiment, implement it, and analyze the results.
- Built connections between business and food science, which allowed me to better understand marketing concepts, such as the importance of perception to consumers.

Leadership Experience
Eagle Scout, Troop 65  May 2011
- Spent over 100 hours completing my Eagle Scout Project, which renovated a historic monument in Beale Township.
- Developed strong leadership and ethics skills that I have utilized in every leadership role since.
- Earned over 2 dozen merit badges ranging from Camping to Nuclear Science to Emergency Preparedness.

President of the LGBTQA Student Roundtable  April 2015-present
- Presided over 10 student organization executive boards, in order to collaborate and plan events on campus and work to make Penn State a more affirming place for LGBTQ+ students.
- Organized conference trips to Denver, Chicago, and Houston for over 30 students to attend the Creating Change Conference by organizing travel, lodging registration, and funding.
- Served on the Student Leaders Roundtable to represent the LGBTQ+ student population and their interests on campus.

Other Leadership Experience:
- President of Out and Allies in Business.
- Vice President of Venture Scouting Crew #8.
- Treasurer of the LGBTQ Student Coalition.

Volunteer Work:
- Member of the Straight Talks Program on campus, which educates Penn State students/faculty on the LGBTQ community.
- Volunteered at local food bank and engaged in community service through church group.
- Volunteered for the Penn State Fresh Start Day of Service, where I prepared cans for Penn State’s THON.
- Team Leader of Relay for Life for the LGBTQ Student Roundtable.

Skills and Interests:
- Computer skills: Microsoft Office products, including Word and Excel, Photoshop, both Mac and Windows operating systems.
- Outdoor recreations: Camping, backpacking, kayaking, canoeing, hiking, and canoeing. Amateur botany.
- Making music: Played piano for 14 years, clarinet for 12 years, and saxophone for 10 years.
- Cooking and baking a large variety of different foods.